

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 0422

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, CSCE, SHUM, UR
SUBJECT: LETTER FOR PRESIDENT CARTER FROM VLADIMIR SLEPAK

SUMMARY: EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED LETTER FOR PRESIDENT CARTER FROM MOSCOW HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST AND REFUSENIK VLADIMIR SLEPAK. LETTER RECOUNTS PLIGHT OF SLEPAK FAMILY AND REQUESTS PRESIDENT'S ASSISTANCE. WE ARE FORWARDING IT TO EUR/SOV FOR DISPOSITION. ENGLISH LANGUAGE COPY WE HAVE RECEIVED (WHICH IS BEING POUCHED TO EUR/SOV) IS SIGNED CARBON AND WE ASSUME SLEPAK IS SENDING ORIGINAL, AND PERHAPS OTHER COPIES, BY OTHER MEANS. SLEPAK BELIEVES HIS SON MAY HAVE APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT ON JANUARY 29 AND IS OBVIOUSLY TRYING TO GET LETTER TO PRESIDENT BEFORE THAT DATE. SLEPAK SAYS HE DOESNOT PLAN TO RELEASE LETTER TO PRESS, BUT THERE IS NO ACCURANCE THAT SOMEONE ELSE WILL NOT IF, AS WE SUSPECT, HE IS HAVING OTHER COPIES CARRIED OUT BY TOURISTS. TEXT OF LETTER FOLLOWS. END SUMMARY.

2. BEGIN QUOTE: MOSCOW, JANUARY 6, 1978. PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER, THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, DC, U.S.A.,
DEAR SIR: YOU ARE KNOWN AS A MAN THANKS TO WHOM HUMAN RIGHTS HAVE BECOME THE BASIS OF TRUST BETWEEN PEOPLES, THANKS TO WHOM THE CIVILIZED NATIONS SEEK
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TO ONE DEGREE OR ANOTHER TO SEE HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVED
THE WORLD OVER.

DURING YOUR ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND NOW AS PRESIDENT,
YOU HAVE REPEATEDLY RAISED THE ISSUE OF VIOLATIONS
OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE USSR.

THIS STAND OF THE PRESIDENT OF ONE OF THE GREAT POWERS OF THE WORLD HAS ADDED STRENGTH AND HOPE, BOTH TO FIGHTERS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SOVIET UNION AND TO ANYONE ELSE WHO SEEKS TO ENJOY THOSE RIGHTS.

IN ONE OF YOUR ELECTION SPEECHES IN 1976, YOU CITED THE CONDITION OF MY FAMILY AS AN EXAMPLE OF VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE USSR. FOR MANY YEARS WE HAVE BEEN DEPRIVED OF THE CHANCE TO ENJOY OUR RIGHT TO EMIGRATE TO ISRAEL. YOU SAID AT THE TIME THAT YOU WOULD NEVER GIVE UP TILL FAMILIES LIKE THE SLEPAKS GOT THE CHANCE TO EMIGRATE FROM THE USSR.

AFTER A GROUP OF JEWS SEEKING TO GO TO ISRAEL WAS BEATEN UP BY KGB AGENTS IN OCTOBER 1976, I RECEIVED YOUR MESSAGE EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER WHAT HAD HAPPENED AND YOUR DEEP PERSONAL INTEREST IN OUR FATE. WE REALIZED THAT WE NOT HAD A STRONG ALLY IN OUR DIFFICULT STRUGGLE.

MEANWHILE, THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES TOOK A STIFF COURSE TOWARDS DEFENDERS OF JUSTICE IN THE USSR. THEY FOLLOWED WITH THE ARRESTS OF ALEXANDER GINZBURG, YURI ORLOV, ANATOLY SHCHARANSKY, JOSEPH BEGUN, AND MANY OTHER FIGHTERS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE USSR. CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS IS A DIFFICULT TIME FOR US NOW. IT IS ADVERSELY AFFECTING MY FAMILY. LET ME REMIND YOU OF MY FAMILY'S STORY IN BRIEF.

WE WERE INVITED TO GO TO ISRAEL IN MARCH 1969. IN APRIL 1969 I HAD TO GIVE UP MY JOB AS A CHIEF OF A LABORATORY IN THE TELEVISION RESEARCH INSTITUTE. I HAVE NEVER WORKED IN MY SPECIALTY SINCE THEN. I MANAGED TO GET VARIOUS JOBS AT DIFFERENT TIMES, BUT HAD TO LEAVE THEM EVERY TIME MY CHIEF WAS INFORMED ABOUT MY INTENTIONS TO EMIGRATE. I HAVE NOT BEEN WORKING AT ALL SINCE SEPTEMBER 1974.

WE WERE ABLE TO APPLY TO EMIGRATE ONLY ONE YEAR AFTER RECEIVING OUR INVITATION TO ISRAEL. THE FIVE MEMBERS OF MY FAMILY, MY WIFE, HER MOTHER, OUR TWO SONS, AND I, APPLIED TOGETHER. THAT WAS IN APRIL 1970. TWO MONTHS LATER WE WERE REFUSED PERMISSION. IN MARCH 1971 MY MOTHER-IN-LAW WAS ALLOWED TO GO, AND WENT TO JERUSALEM. OLD AND SICK, SHE HAS SINCE THEN BEEN LIVING ALONE, WITH THE ONE DREAM OF

SEEING US AGAIN.

LAST OCTOBER THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES HAD TO RELEASE
OUR OLDER SON ALEXANDER FROM THE USSR, SINCE HE WAS
MARRIED TO AN AMERICAN.

ALL THESE YEARS MY FAMILY HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO
VARIOUS FORMS OF HARASSMENT AND PERSECUTION, FROM
HOUSE RAIDS, ARRESTS AND IMPRISONMENTS, TO BEATINGS,
DISMISSALS FROM WORK, AND SO ON.

ANOTHER HORROR CAME CREEPING UP ON US WHEN OUR
YOUNGER SON LENOID APPROACHED THE MILITARY CONSCRIP-
TION AGE. EVER SINCE HE WAS TEN YEARS OLD, LEONID
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GREW UP IN A FAMILY FIGHTING TO LEAVE THE SOVIET
UNION. HE WAS PERSECUTED ALONG WITH THE REST OF
THE FAMILY. HE HAD ALREADY BEEN HONORED WITH
ISRAELI CITIZENSHIP. OUR FAMILY HAD REJECTED ITS
SOVIET CITIZENSHIP (BUT HAS NEVER RECEIVED ANY
ANSWER TO OUR REJECTION). HOW COULD HE POSSIBLY
SWEAR ALLEGIANCE AND LOYALTY TO THE SOVIET
GOVERNMENT, AS ALL SOLDIERS MUST?

WE DECIDED ON A DESPERATE STEP. IN JANUARY 1976,
MY WIFE AND I OFFICIALLY DIVORCED SO THAT SHE AND
OUR SON COULD APPLY TO LEAVE SEPARATELY. THEY WERE
REFUSED ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE AUTHORITIES DID NOT
REGARD THAT AS A REUNIFICATION OF A FAMILY. THEY
SAID, "YOU AND YOUR SON ARE ONE FAMILY, AND YOUR
MOTHER IS ANOTHER."

WHEN LENOID REACHED THE MILITARY CONSCRIPTION AGE
OF 18, LAST YEAR, HE WAS CALLED IN AND TOLD HE WOULD
HAVE TO SERVE IN THE SOVIET ARMY. HE REFUSED. HE
SENT THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE A STATEMENT POINTING
OUT THAT HE IS A CITIZEN OF ISRAEL, AND CONSIDERS
ISRAEL HIS ONLY HOMELAND. HE CAN THEREFORE, HE
SAID, NOT SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT
AND CONSEQUENTLY SERVE IN THE SOVIET ARMY. LENOID
IS NOW THREATENED WITH LEGAL PROSECUTION. A COURT
CAN SENTENCE HIM TO THREE YEARS IN A PRISON CAMP.

THIS, THEN, IS THE CURRENT SITUATION OF MY
FAMILY: WE ARE DIVIDED, MY MOTHER-IN-LAW AND ONE
SON, ALEXANDER, LIVING ABROAD. OUR YOUNGER SON,
LENOID, IS THREATENED WITH ARREST ANY DAY, TO FACE
A THREE-YEAR TERM IN A PRISON CAMP. MY WIFE MARIA
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CANNOT GO TO HER MOTHER SINCE THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES REFUSE TO REGARD THAT AS THE REUNIFICATION OF A FAMILY. I AM NOT RELEASED AND DO NOT KNOW WHY, SINCE IT IS ABSURD TO TALK OF SECRET WORK AFTER NOT HAVING WORKED IN MY SPECIALTY AT ALL FOR NEARLY NINE YEARS.

IN THE NAME OF GOODNESS AND JUSTICE, IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY, PLEASE HELP MY FAMILY REUNITE IN ISRAEL.

RESPECTFULLY YOURS, VLADIMIR SLEPAK. END QUOTE.
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